

PRESS RELEASE



Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure

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Bipartisan Amtrak Funding Legislation Introduced By U.S. House Transportation Committee Leadership; Amtrak Would Receive \$2 Billion Annually For Next Three Years

Washington, D.C. - Legislation that would authorize annual funding of \$2 billion over the next three years to finance Amtrak's capital and operating expenses has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The legislation (**H.R. 1630**) was introduced by:

- **U.S. Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska)**, Chairman, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
- **U.S. Rep. James Oberstar (D-MN)**, Ranking Democrat, Transportation Committee
- **U.S. Rep. Steven LaTourette (R-OH)**, Chairman, Subcommittee on Railroads
- **U.S. Rep. Corrine Brown (D-FL)**, Ranking Democrat, Railroads Subcommittee

In addition, the four Members also introduced legislation today that would provide \$60 billion for high-speed rail and rail infrastructure projects - **The Railroad Infrastructure Development and Expansion Act for the 21st Century (RIDE 21) - H.R. 1631.**

"Although serious disagreements still exist about Amtrak's long-term management strategy and structure, there is a common understanding of the need for near-term funding," said **Transportation Committee Chairman Don Young**. "This bill, at its requested level of \$2 billion per year, will allow Amtrak to continue with critical work under its current five-year plan.

"The legislation also contains funding accountability procedures closely modeled on those already in effect under the current appropriations laws.

"It is my hope that the funding authorized in this bill will allow a window of opportunity for a last-chance Amtrak turnaround."

"Without Amtrak, millions of passengers - many of whom cannot afford to drive a car or buy a plane ticket - would be stranded, millions of travelers would be added to already congested roads and airports, 20,000 workers would be out on the streets looking for new jobs, communities and businesses that depend on passenger rail service would suffer, and states already under tight budget constraints would be forced to figure out how to pay for new service," said **Ranking Member Oberstar**. "It is our responsibility to ensure that Amtrak survives."

"This bipartisan bill will provide funds so Amtrak can continue operations and begin to repair and restore the Northeast Corridor," said **Railroad Subcommittee Chairman LaTourette**. "It's clear from the size and scope of the bill that we recognize the vital role railroads play in our national transportation system."

"The current funding issues concerning Amtrak bring up a fundamental question of where our nation stands on public transportation," said **Railroad Subcommittee Ranking Member Brown**. "We have an opportunity to improve a system that serves our need for passenger rail service, or we can let that fall apart, leaving our country's travelers and businesses with absolutely no alternative form of public transportation."

Background Information

H.R. 1630 would authorize \$2 billion per year for each of the fiscal years 2006 through 2008 to the Secretary of Transportation for the benefit of Amtrak capital and operating expenses, and Amtrak excess railroad retirement expense.

The Secretary would be required to set aside a reserve to ensure that Amtrak meets all of its contractual obligations related to commuter rail and state-supported rail services. Amtrak would be required to submit to the Secretary comprehensive business plans and follow-up reports with a separate accounting for its various lines of business, and reports related to capital projects expenditures.

According to Amtrak, this level of funding would be sufficient to begin to address critical needs outlined in its five year capital plan, which is geared to restoring the Amtrak system, including the Northeast Corridor, to a good state of repair.

**For additional information, access the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee website
at:
www.house.gov/transportation**

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